NOVEMBER, 1942

37-214

NINEPENCE

THEATRE WORLD

This Month: Scenes from "CLAUDIA"

cture by John Vickers — *HUGH SINCLAIR and PAMELA BROWN*

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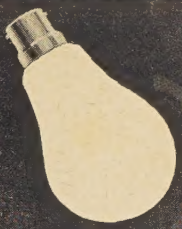

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November, 1942

Over the Footlights

AMONG new plays produced during the month have been two we found moving in the extreme. One, the work of a young playwright, written two years ago when the author was only nineteen, is a commentary on the complex times in which we live. The other, by the author of such strong stuff as *Rope* and *Gaslight,* is, on the other hand, an escape from life to-day into the simplicity of mediæval France. Peter Ustinov's *House of Regrets* and Patrick Hamilton's *The Duke in Darkness* are not easily judged by commonly held standards of what constitutes a good play; they are, however, in their different ways, voices crying in the wilderness; articulate enough to make us take heart for the theatre, and sincere enough to give us hope that sanity is just around the corner.

. . . . .

IT is worth recording that when the Playhouse reopens in a week or two only the Duke of Yorks will remain for any would-be producer to snap up for his new play. This situation is reminiscent not so much of pre-war days as of the days before the depression years. We make a present of the fact to the enemy: the people's ability to enjoy lawful leisure hours is surely a sign of high morale. If there are yet more " depression years " to face after the war is over let us hope we are wise enough to carry with us the stimulus of a theatre that has kept its standard high. We shall, if we can grope our way to the truth that the drama is not so much a recreation as a necessity for the sensitive human spirit. And there are signs, at long last, that we are beginning to learn that fundamental lesson. F.S.

Through the death on October 14th of Dame Marie Tempest, at the age of seventy-eight, the stage has lost a unique figure. She will not be replaced, for only once could one expect to meet such elegance in a comedienne, such wit and such perfect stage technique. Her performance was at all times flawless: it was unthinkable that Dame Marie could have had her " off-moments," and yet she will be remembered because, as Canon Richard Hannay (George A. Birmingham) said at the memorial service at St. Martin's, " she gave to the world the gift of laughter, the sunlight of pure mirth."

It was not until 1900, after some fifteen years in musical comedy that she gravitated to light comedy, but it was in her later years that she attained her full stature in such plays as " Hay Fever," " The First Mrs. Fraser," " Mr. Pym Passes By," and " Dear Octopus."

The host of famous stars who attended St. Martin's on October 22nd bore witness to the admiration the theatre felt for one of its most faithful servants, and theatre lovers throughout the world will regret the passing of one so ineffably the artist.

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New Shows of the Month

Waltz Without End—*Cambridge, Sept. 29th.*
House of Regrets—*Arts, Oct. 6th.*
The Duke in Darkness—*St. James, Oct. 8th.*
The Little Foxes—*Piccadilly, Oct. 21st.*
Du Barry was a Lady—*His Majesty's, Oct. 22nd.*

REVIVALS

Merchant of Venice—*Westminster, Sept. 30th.*
Hedda Gabler—*Mercury, Sept. 30th*
Lilac Time—*Stoll, Oct. 13th.*
The Importance of being Earnest—*Phœnix, Oct., 14th.*
Henry IVth—*Westminster, Oct. 23rd.*

"Waltz Without End"

EVEN in the world of make-believe there is a law of integrity not lightly to be broken. I have a shrewd suspicion that *Waltz Without End* breaks that law and that this accounts for the fact that in spite of its lavishness, its lovely settings, music and dancing, this production does not wholly satisfy. The "integrity" in this case is the character and music of Chopin, who has been chosen as the hero of what is virtually an outstandingly well-produced musical comedy. On reflection it is borne home that any unknown young man would have served as central figure, and that Chopin's music should never be made the background of a musical comedy in which the humour is of the 1942 breed dressed up to look a couple of centuries old. I can indeed imagine a theatre piece to suit Chopin and his music—especially in these days when that great composer's love of country has a new meaning—but it bears no resemblance to *Waltz Without End*.

Having said that, let it be added that there is much loveliness in this show, some really exquisite dancing, and if you can bear to hear Chopin's work made to fit the words, much melody. Ivor Sheridan sings well as Chopin opposite Jane Carr, a charming Wanda, and there is strong support from Betty Warren, Bertram Dench, Jimmy Godden, Eliot Makeham and Bertram Wallis. Pola Nirenska, Moira Kennett and Daria Luna are high lights of the dancing. Jack Buchanan's ability as producer could not be in doubt, nor the efficiency of the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Bernard Grun. Indeed there is an uncommon amount of talent, which makes it all the more a pity that for this critic at all events, the mark was missed.

F.S.

"House of Regrets"

CRITICS who are not given to carrying a torch for any playwright, least of all for a neophyte of tender years, have not hesitated to speak of the "genius" of Peter Ustinov; his *House of Regrets*, a new tragi-comedy in three acts staged as the Arts Theatre Group's fifth programme, has taken others than the critics by storm.

Here there is for several reasons cause for wonder. In the first place tradition, convention and even conviction lead us to take for granted the paramountcy, in drama, of incident and plot (witness the recent Saroyan controversies); all of Ustinov's plots were either worked out before the play began or are due to begin fermenting after the final curtain drops. But the fabric that remains is colourful and strong. In the second place we have seen before on the stage many such folk as now come and go (or come and stay in dignified penury) in this House of Regrets. The world is full of Marina Barinovas, Paul Barinovs, June Downeys and Sergei Timofeevs; millions share their problems and are at this moment as far from a solution as they. But from no one play has one so forcefully realised that there is room in many a backwater for an unlimited number of viewpoints until youthful crudity or senile obstinacy shatter all dreams in their clash.

Ustinov "touches on all foibles with a gentle hand." The anachronistic military schemes of White General Cherevenko (Max Adrian), the outmoded and delicate ecstasies of Tansmann the Choreographer (Noel Willman), the laissez-faire resignation of the Admiral (John Ruddock), the rhapsodic religiosity of Madame Samina (Christine Silver), the futility of Madame Krohne—a "surplus woman" if ever there was one—(Josephine Middleton), the failures of Strukhov (Gibb McLaughlin), of the tempestuous Tamara (Miki Iveria) and even of sweet-souled Madame Barinova (Susan Richards) to step into the contemporary layout, are neither pilloried nor condoned, but so sympathetically observed that one concurs in the critics' fairest prognostications. Barbara Carswell's stridency, Lalage Lewis's vehemence, David Bird's effeteness, Julian Dallas's young vulnerability, are played without a false note. And the temperamental behind-the-scenes outbursts, accompanied by tears, screams, thuds of assailed

New Shows of the Month *(cont'd)*

bodies and feverishly-packed cases, in themselves provide enough action for an average play.

And this is far more than an average play.

E.M.H.

"The Duke in Darkness"

THIS play uplifted me against all the arguments of my reason. Reason said there's no plot worth mentioning, very little movement and no great cause burning to a triumphant victory. Perhaps it was the time and place—St. James' Theatre in the autumn of 1942, elegant retreat from a crazy world; maybe it was the acting, or even perhaps the impressive stage set with that vast expanse of sky beyond the castle battlements whereon was brilliantly written the moods of the play. Perhaps something of all these and the conviction that the author had deliberately set forth this simple tale of an imprisoned Duke as though longing to offset the wide sweep of a Dumas novel against this present Wellsian " Things to Come " state of affairs.

Leslie Banks plays with measured grandeur the part of the Duke of Latteraine, imprisoned these fifteen years in a remote castle of his enemy, the Duke of Lamorre (portrayed with wicked audacity by Walter Fitzgerald), and Michael Redgrave adds to his already considerable stature with a finely wrought sensitive piece of acting as Gribaud, the imprisoned Duke's faithful servant, whose brain gives way under the strain of confinement. The Duke feigns blindness as a means to his ultimate escape, but in the end it is not so much escape as rescue by a band of staunch supporters, that sets him free; though poor Gribaud is perforce sacrificed for the good of all. Hugh Burden is rescuer in chief, and gives a splendid performance in the thankless part of Voulain. For the rest Richmond Nairne brings a sinister touch to the play as Count d'Aublaye, a fop from the French Court whose soul is bathed in intrigue, and there is able support from D. J. Williams, Fred Groves, Charles Deane, Humphrey Heathcote and Spencer Moore.

F.S.

"The Little Foxes"

THIS is a notable production of a famous American play that has long been awaited, and if it proved a trifle disappointing this may be due to its having arrived after, instead of before, Lillian Hellman's other great play, *Watch on the Rhine*. There is also by this time an outstandingly brilliant film of the play for comparison.

It is the women who score in this production. Fay Compton, looking very lovely in the dresses of the period, brings an unexpected touch of ruthlessness to bear on the part of Regina Giddens, the woman who out-Heddas Hedda Gabler in brutal coldbloodedness. In this tale of an ambitious American woman who is willing to sacrifice her daughter and virtually murders her husband in her insatiable greed for wealth and position, a welcome contrast is found in the gentle Birdie Hubbard, Regina's sister-in-law (a lovely performance by Mary Merrall), whose sensitive soul has been crushed by the Hubbard family, representing the crude commercialism that crept in at the turn of the century. Hugh Miller and Julien Mitchell appear as Regina's unpleasant brothers Oscar and Benjamin; Dulcie Gray gives a sensitive performance as Regina's daughter Alexandra, and Ronald Ward is most convincing as Horace Giddens, the sick husband Regina despised. There are excellent performances from Connie Smith and Robert Adams as Addie and Cal, the coloured servants; from Percy Marmont as a business man of the old school and Richard Attenborough as Leo, Birdie and Oscar's sneak of a son. A very fine stage set brings atmosphere to this sombre story of some unusually unpleasant people, who do not, however, we are glad to say, triumph in the end.

F.S.

"Du Barry was a Lady"

THIS lavish bit of nonsense got a deservedly big hand when it opened at His Majesty's on October 22nd too late for a lengthy review in this issue, and is obviously all set for a very long run. Where it would be, though, without Frances Day and Arthur Riscoe one hesitates to think. Who but Miss Day could create such a roguish parody of the royal mistress, yet looking all the time as though she had been poured into that famous lady's lovely clothes and century? Who but loose limbed Arthur Riscoe could do justice to this crazy idea of a notorious French monarch? It's all the story of a lavatory attendant in an American night club who wins a sweepstake and later dreams he is Louis XV and all his American friends members of the French court. The whole is carried out against a background of quickfiring American wisecracks and Cole Porter's catchy music. Jackie Hunter, Bruce Trent, Inga Anderson and Frances Marsden are other talented members of the cast who add to the general fun. The dresses have to be seen to be believed.

Du Barry was a Lady is anyone's choice for the brightest evening in Town, and that's saying a lot.

F.S.

LESLIE BANKS and MICHAEL REDGRAVE
as the Duke of Latteraine and Gribaud in a scene from *The Duke in Darkness*, the new play by Patrick Hamilton at the St. James's Theatre.

REVIVALS

"The Merchant of Venice"

ROBERT ATKINS' season of Shakespeare at the Westminster opened with a delightful production of *The Merchant of Venice*, with Mr. Atkins as Shylock (a part he plays with a restraint and dignity that brings complete conviction), and Adèle Dixon as the loveliest and most vivacious Portia we have seen for many a year. She romped through the part with refreshing gaiety. Other good performances came from Maxine Audley as Nerissa, Helen Cherry as Jessica, Michael Martin Harvey as Launcelot Gobbo, Nigel Clarke as Antonio, John Wynyard as Bassanio and Peter Bennett as Gratiano.

Mr. Atkins has followed *The Merchant* with *Henry IV*, produced too late for review in this issue.

F.S.

"Hedda Gabler"

THE Mercury Theatre production of the Ibsen classic is an outstanding piece of work in which the performance of Sonia Dresdel as Hedda is one not easily to be forgotten. In this tiny theatre stage and audience are almost one and the task of carrying through a highly dramatic role in such intimacy is no easy one. Michael Oldham, Natalie Moya, Julian Randall, Irene Arnold, Dennis Ratcliffe and Namara Michael give splendid performances in support. As the run will continue to November 7th there is still a chance to see this revival of *Hedda Gabler* and some of the finest acting in London.

F.S.

"Lilac Time"

THE current revival at the Stoll is in every way a delightful one, fortunate in having two principals with very fine voices in Frank Titterton and Irene Eisinger, with Derek Oldham in support. The lovely Schubert songs are as tuneful as ever and will never lose their charm. That stalwart, George Graves, is in charge of the comedy. *Lilac Time* was originally produced in 1922, and has enjoyed many a revival and tour of the provinces since then.

F.S.

"The Importance of being Earnest"

WITH a splendid constellation of a cast, including John Gielgud, Edith Evans, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies and Peggy Ashcroft, Oscar Wilde's malicious, witty and ever-fresh comedy graces the boards of the Phœnix in its second war-time revival. And graceful it is from curtain to curtain, with its swirl of beautiful *fin de siècle* gowns, its swift flights of effortless repartee, its faithful reproduction of 1895 social poise and deportment, its unkind but realistic emphasis on the unimportant things that really matter so enormously.

The barbed shafts of Lady Bracknell (Edith Evans), Algernon Moncrieffe (Cyril Ritchard) and John Worthing (John Gielgud) and the polished cattiness of two particularly (and therefore terrifyingly) sweet women in the persons of the Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax (Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies) and Cecily Cardew (Peggy Ashcroft) are as sharp and as brilliant as ever, since they comment on the timeless and the universal, not merely on Wilde's contemporary scene. And what nostalgic glimpses does the play afford of tea in quiet gardens, of a placid world where three-volume novels were born, matchmaking was a full-time and honourable occupation, and where "Bunburying" was no trouble at all to the unconscripted elegants, in an era where to be *désoeuvré* was to be distinguished!

E.M.H.

John Vickers.

'AS WE GO TO PRESS

THE Winter Garden Theatre has reopened after being closed for many years. Jack Hylton and Tom Arnold have taken the lease, and the first show there under their management is *Old Town Hall* with Max Miller, Adelaide Hall, Richard Goolden and others; produced too late for review in this issue.

* * *

ANOTHER first play has come to Town—*Murder from Memory*, presented at the Ambassadors by J. W. Pemberton. The author is twenty-two-year-old Ronald Millar, who was recently invalided out of the Navy. Mr. Millar wrote the play while afloat and later showed it to Mr. Pemberton, under whose management he played in *Swinging the Gate* at the Ambassadors. The play opened on October 29th, too late for review this month.

* * *

LINNIT and Dunfee are reviving Vernon Sylvaine's farce, *Aren't Men Beasts*, at the Garrick on November 11th, with Robertson Hare, Alfred Drayton, Helen Christie, Ruth Maitland, Fred Morant, Faith Brooke and Sydney King in the principal parts. This popular farce was, of course, first produced at the Strand in 1936. *Warn that Man*, the Gordon Harker comedy thriller, begins a tour on November 2nd after its long and successful run at the Garrick.

* * *

THE Playhouse is another theatre to reopen. Somerset Maugham's comedy *Home and Beauty* will be produced there on November 12th, with Ronald Squire, Isabel Jeans, Barry Jones and Antony Holles in the cast. The Playhouse, which has been closed for two years, has been redecorated.

* * *

OWEN NARES is to appear in the West End shortly in Robert Sherwood's *The Petrified Forest*.

* * *

THE Sadler's Wells Ballet Company opened their autumn season of nine weeks at the New on October 20th. *The Rake's Progress*, Ninette de Valois's Hogarth ballet, has been revived after two and a half years. All the original scenery and dresses, now replaced with the help of the designer, Rex Whistler, were lost after the last performance of this ballet in Holland, on the night before the German invasion. The company is again headed by Robert Helpmann and Margot Fonteyn, and in a week or so a short comedy ballet by Helpmann, *The Birds*, will be produced.

* * *

A NEW play by Beverley Baxter, called *It Happened in September*, was produced at the Orpheum, Golder's Green, on October 19th. The play deals with the years 1937 to 1940, and tells of a country Member of Parliament and his family, and the way political events mould their outlook during those fateful years.

* * *

IT Happened in September was followed by *Busman's Honeymoon*, the Dorothy Sayers and M. St. Clair Byrne play, at this theatre on October 26th.

* * *

FOR the first time for thirty-three years, with the exception of a brief visit of one four years ago, a circus is to be seen at a West End theatre.

On October 28th R. S. Goddard presented *Chessington Circus comes to Town* at the Scala Theatre, thus opening another London theatre which has been closed to the public for a long time. Mr. Goddard has, for the past eleven years, been associated with Chessington Zoo, where he has regularly presented a circus, but this is the first occasion it has left its native home.

IN "FULL SWING"

Eighteen-year-old Ingrid Puxon, one of the prettiest girls in the successful Hulbert-Courtneidge *Full Swing* at the Palace Theatre, was literally the last girl to leave Germany for England. After a horse-riding tour through Hungary, she crossed the frontier at Aachen—in the back seat of the last compartment of the last coach of the last train.

INGRID PUXON

PICTURES
BY
JOHN VICKERS

David: What's your grey blouse doing in your cheque book?

David Naughton gives his wife, Claudia, a hand with her bank account.

(Hugh Sinclair as David Naughton and Pamela Brown as Claudia Naughton.)

"Claudia"

BIG hit of the season is Rose Franken's play *Claudia*, which has already achieved a phenomenal run in America. The London production, presented by Lee Ephraim and Emile Littler at the St. Martin's, is brilliantly done, and has introduced to West End audiences an outstanding young actress in Pamela Brown. Needless to say cold black and white pictures can do scant justice to her eloquent acting and vivid personality. It is certain London has found a new star, yet Miss Brown's performance does not overshadow the clever acting of the supporting cast, among whom Hugh Sinclair particularly is outstanding. The play is directed by William Armstrong, with décor by Clifford Pember. It seems almost superfluous to add that *Claudia* will be with us for a long time to come.

Mrs. Brown: I believe you love her more than you do yourself.

Claudia's mother (Mary Hinton) is visiting her daughter and son-in-law at their farm, seventy miles from New York. There is a bond between Mrs. Brown and David Naughton—their love for Claudia, the girl-wife who refuses to grow up.

Claudia: Shhh — that was gorgeous.

Claudia, the joy and despair of her mother and husband, takes a childish pleasure in listening-in to other people's conversations on the party wire. She has all the unself-consciousness of youth and an embarrassing habit of saying just what she thinks. But she is inarticulate when it comes to her love for her mother, which is in the nature of an obsession that threatens to prevent her from settling down happily in her new married life on the farm.

(*Right*):
Jerry Seymour (Thorley Walters): It's a decoy.

Claudia finds her neighbour, a young Englishman, quite attractive when he pays an unexpected call.

(*Left*): *Claudia*: I've got a face like a baked potato.
David: No dear, baked apple.

David discovers his wife in a new mood after Jerry Seymour's visit.

David: When you like the person you love, that's marriage. And it's exciting.

David is infinitely patient with Claudia, meeting with quiet good humour and sympathetic understanding many trying situations arising out of her adolescent *gaucherie*.

Madame Daruschka : It's not what it is worth to you, it is what it is worth to me.

A well-known prima donna pays a whirlwind visit with David's sister-in-law, Julia Naughton, and in a very short time persuades Claudia to sell the farm

(Below left)
Madame Daruschka : The first week-end is always the hardest.

Madame Daruschka brings her unconventional outlook to bear on Julia's problems of the heart. (Mary Martlew as Julia Naughton.)

(Below) :
Lea Seidl as the flamboyant and amusing prima donna.

Claudia : I didn't expect to see you.

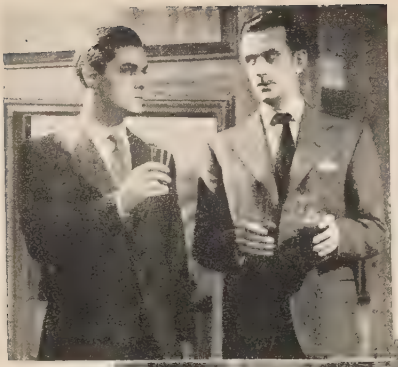
Julia and her friend try to bring a touch of sophistication to Claudia with their gifts of an evening gown and perfume. Jerry Seymour calls again just as Claudia comes down the stairs as pleased as a little girl in her first party dress.

Madame Daruschka : Wait! What month were you born?

Jerry : May.

Madame Daruschka : Taurus, the sign of the Bull. It is perfect.

The exotic visitor bears down on a bewildered Jerry Seymour, whom she had first of all mistaken for David.



David: Want a drink?
Jerry: Thanks, I'll take it straight.

A trying moment for the two men. David had returned to find Claudia (in the new gown) in the arms of Jerry. However, her husband's unfortunate arrival in no way embarrasses the amazing Claudia, and David's quite natural anger quickly turns to sympathy for Jerry, obviously a harmless enough young man.

Claudia Can't you see, I was crazy about you.

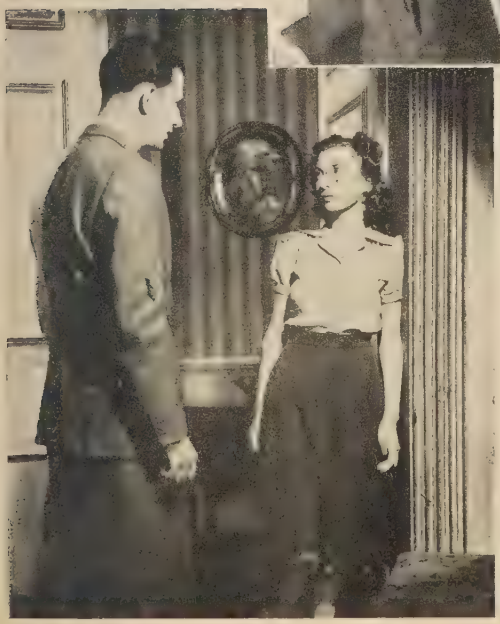
Claudia, aware at last that she has hurt David, tries to explain how her love for him was behind the interlude with Jerry.

(Left)
Bertha (Amy Frank): And when you both want it, it's beautiful.

Claudia discovers she is going to have a baby.

David : Well, Mrs. Brown, I take off my hat to you. And when my time comes, I hope I can take it like that.

Mrs. Brown, unknown to Claudia, has been suffering from ill-health, and a special consultation with her doctor reveals she is suffering from a fatal disease. Her only thought is to keep the news from her daughter.



Claudia : You always said I'd listen once too often.

Claudia has overheard the fateful telephone conversation. The blow is catastrophic, and not even the knowledge that she is to have a baby seems to bring her any consolation.

Bertha : The boy's in bad company again.

Fritz (Frederic Richter) and Bertha, the Naughton's servants, have their own troubles in the shape of a wayward son, for whose sake Fritz has recently served a prison sentence.

(*Left*): Mrs. Brown comes back to the farm bravely determined to keep the news of her illness from Claudia. Claudia on her part, still afraid to face up to this unexpected blow, nevertheless makes a supreme effort to behave as though nothing had happened.

David: What's the idea? Am I a flamingo?
Claudia shamefacedly produces a pair of pyjamas she has been altering for David: unfortunately by shortening the same leg twice.

Julia: You're all looking so well it must be the country air.
Julia, calling again, is unaware of the tragedy beneath the surface.

Claudia Don't ever envy anyone, Julia, make the most of every minute—while you can.

The moment comes when Claudia is able to conquer her resentment against Fate With a new tenderness she lets her mother know through these stray words to Julia that she knows all about her fatal illness. Mrs. Brown's mind is set at rest by this revelation, and while mother and daughter continue to treat each other with their accustomed banter, the strained atmosphere has gone. David too, whose deep understanding has done much to pilot Claudia through the crisis, is aware that his young wife has reached a milestone in her life

Claudia: So long, Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown: So long, Mrs. Naughton.

The closing moment of the play. Claudia has a new command of herself, a new poise. She is growing up.

Whispers from the Wings

BY LOOKER ON

The fight scene from *Men in Shadow*, mentioned on this page. *Left*, Derek Elphinstone as Enshaw, and *right*, John Mills as Lew.

MEN in Shadow at the Vaudeville, with its humanity and strong message of hope, has the stamp of authenticity.

It is, I thought, small wonder that John Mills has great faith in it. I was watching him making up for the part of Lew and conversing with his reflection in the mirror. Even "secondhand," his face glowed with enthusiasm when he talked about his young wife's achievement in writing this—her first play—in only ten days. "Sir Stafford Cripps' moving broadcast about the occupied countries was the immediate inspiration," Mr. Mills told me, "but long before that Mary had the determination to write a play —I remember one day on the Surrey hills when we discussed it. We couldn't foresee then what the play would be!" In reply to my remark that *Men in Shadow* is an unusual play for a woman to have written Mr. Mills told me that his wife has a great gift for dialogue and a real understanding of men. ("You should see how popular she is with the cast").

I fell to admiring some charming pictures of Mary Hayley Bell and Baby Mills, who at eleven months is a ravishing blonde and already a film star. This of course brought us to John Mills' latest film triumph—*In Which We Serve*—the Noel Coward film about the navy that has proved something of a sensation. (Incidentally the manager of the Vaudeville says that a number of people booking for *Men in Shadow*, tell him that having seen John Mills' brilliant performance as Shorty in the film, they have come to see him in the flesh).

Mr. Mills' first association with Noel Coward was at the beginning of his stage career, back in 1929 at Singapore when Noel Coward, as guest artist, played Stanhope in *Journey's End*, opposite John Mills' Raleigh. And, of course, one of his first big West End parts was as Joe Marryot in *Cavalcade*. "All this has a distinct patriotic and warlike flavour," I remarked, "and ever since you were invalided out of the army, you have as it were, been right in the thick of the battle." "That's true—I have scarcely had time to nurse my grievance with fate that having joined up in the ranks on the day war broke out I had just got my commission when out I had to come." Mr. Mills' part in *Men in Shadow* is pretty strenuous, and he has to dose himself with medicine three times a day. His fight with the spy, illustrated on this page, is the most realistic I have seen on the stage for many a day, and as he reminded me, the airman pal he has to heave through the trap door at the most thrilling moment of the play, weighs a good twelve stone.

Mr. Mills was very keen to know how this and that situation in the play struck me. His interest in the play is obviously more than just that of a good part to play: in fact I had the feeling that Lew and John Mills are very much the same person. His brilliant blue eyes are of the particular English type one associates with all the Scarlet Pimpernels of literature.

"Let me tell you of an interesting coincidence before you go," said Mr. Mills. "Before the play was produced I wanted to perfect my French accent, and was introduced to Frank Bauer for the purpose. When my new tutor discovered what it was about he asked me whether he could help with the sets for the play. I must confess I was more than dubious until I heard that this casual acquaintance was a well-known French stage designer! It was a happy coincidence I can tell you, and it so happens that the convincing interior which is the scene of the play is actually modelled on an old mill on M. Bauer's family estate in France."

I have a feeling that *Men in Shadow* has launched John Mills and his wife on an ideal stage partnership. Meantime, Mary Hayley Bell's inspired first play is a play of the moment, which I am convinced will be proved a real piece of history when the story of the war is written.

Scenes from Mary Hayley Bell's thrilling play at the Vaudeville, showing *above, L-R.*: Ralph Michael as Mordan, Paul Bonifas as Moy, Robert Wilton as Kenny, John Mills as Lew, Alice Gachet as Cherie, Derek Elphinstone as Enshaw and Hubert Gregg as Polly.

The play tells of a secret underground movement working against the Nazis, which is led by a R.A.F. pilot who was shot down over France (John Mills). The pictures below illustrate some of the lighter moments (*left* Ralph Michael and Robert Wilton; *right*: John Mills, Robert Wilton and Hubert Gregg).

Men in Shadow

at the

VAUDEVILLE

Swaybrick Studios

Stage Fright

by Eric Johns

MY blood still runs cold at the recollection of that nightmare moment in the Fifth Form French Class, even though twenty years have rolled away since Mademoiselle called out, " Johns, read that Alfred de Musset poem at the top of the next page."

As I turned over the leaf and my eye caught sight of the first line I was uncannily aware of being possessed by something sinister, and knew full well that I would never be able to carry out Mademoiselle's request. My lips parted in an effort to read the opening line, but instead of emitting any sound they merely quivered helplessly beyond my control, while my jaw dropped open as if it no longer belonged to me. It began to tremble with a violence that completely un-nerved me, leaving me gibbering like an idiot, though unable to produce so much as a whisper. Out of sheer embarrassment and in what seemed but a fraction of a second my temperature soared up to fever heat, literally covering me with shame from head to foot.

Fighting wildly against something essentially evil, I summoned every ounce of courage and concentration to pronounce that first word—it was only " Quand "—such a simple word to say—but it was quite beyond me and the tense expectant silence that by now permeated the classroom simply paralysed me. " Come along, Johns!" urged Mademoiselle, patiently waiting with her eye on the book and consequently ignorant of the hell-on-earth which had fallen so suddenly and inexplicably about my ears.

As I dug my fingernails remorselessly into my bare knees a cold sweat broke out on the back of my neck. With one last despairing effort I tried to produce that simple monosyllabic " Quand," feeling that if only I could force it even in an unnatural falsetto it would be an achievement, perhaps capable of giving me sufficient courage to continue, and to face the class afterwards. But it was not to be. To my dismay I " went to pieces," shattered by a " nerve " panic which appeared to have petrified my vocal chords. The hideous climax came in the form of a cruel titter from Mademoiselle's contemptible pet pupil—a titter that caused a sickening throb in my temples and left me wondering why I had ever been born.

IT seems to me that this ghastly experience of a generation ago, still too painfully vivid in my memory, was purely and simply an attack of stage fright, despite the fact that I am no actor and it occurred in a schoolroom instead of a theatre.

Since that wretched day the problem of stage fright has held a cobra-like fascination for me, though actors have not proved very helpful in my quest for further knowledge of this dark and devastating subject. Most artists, following the example of Ivor Novello, touch wood and say they have never suffered from it; others who may have endured the agony of this malady prefer to remain discreetly silent on the subject. Quite recently I was lucky enough to draw two actors of totally different schools into a constructive discussion on stage fright—Baliol Holloway who has devoted a lifetime to the evergreen classics, and Griffith Jones who has spent the past decade in fashionable West-End successes.

" Stage fright strikes me," remarked Griff, " as a sort of necessary evil in the profession. It is to acting what labour pains are to childbirth . . . the very pangs of creation. All artistic creation is preceded by stage fright, as a volcano suffers a sort of nerve tremor just before eruption in a tremendous effort to release the strain of waiting, preparation, and creation.

" No actor is immune from stage fright whether he specialises in Chekov or musical comedy. It can occur at any time and in any place whenever an artist is called upon to pass from one mood to another—to shed his real self in order to assume his stage self. Furthermore, it might just as easily seize those artists who look and behave more or less the same both on and off the stage. It is a gathering of nervous force and can just as easily possess one about to make a speech, to meet new people, or to tackle a new job.

" Perhaps it is more likely to occur when a player is alone upon the stage, for then his sense of responsibility is strained to the utmost. He has to shoulder all the blame for any false move, as there is no one else to whom the focus of attention can be shifted. If there is a slip no one else stands

(Continued on page 27)

"Flare Path" AT THE APOLLO

Doris: They haven't lit the flare path yet.

Patricia: What's the flare path?

Doris: Lights in a line so that they can see when they're taking off.

L-R.: Mrs. Maudie Miller (Kathleen Harrison), Countess Doris Skriczevinsky (Adrianne Allen), Mrs. Oakes (Dora Gregory), proprietress of the hotel, and Patricia Graham (Leueen MacGrath) in a scene from the play.

TERENCE RATTIGAN, author of *French Without Tears,* has brought all his skill at dialogue and characterisation to bear on a very different subject in *Flare Path,* the play about bomber pilots and their wives, which has already enjoyed a considerable run at the Apollo.

The story, which has a good deal of "love interest," is nevertheless exciting in the extreme, and affords a fine tribute to our brave young bomber pilots and the equally brave women who wait—and hope.

The scene is the lounge of the Falcon Hotel at Milchester, Lincs, adjoining the airfield, and the action covers the night of a highly important raid on enemy territory.

The acting is brilliant, and much praise is due to Anthony Asquith's direction and Ruth Keating's effective setting. *Flare Path* is yet another of the many successful "straight" plays presented by H. M. Tennent, Ltd., in the West End in recent months.

PICTURES BY JOHN VICKERS.

Peter Kyle, famous film star, comes to stay at the hotel and is recognised by Percy, the boy who serves in the bar.

(George Cole as Percy and Martin Walker as Peter Kyle.)

Below

Sergeant "Dusty" Miller has an argument with his wife, Maudie, who has taken time off from her job at a laundry to spend a night at the hotel with her husband, and not being over-intelligent had taken the wrong bus. The other guests look on with amusement. *L-R.*: Count Skriczevinsky (Gerard Hinze), Countess Doris Skriczevinsky (Adrianne Allen), Peter Kyle (Martin Walker), Sergt. "Dusty" Miller (Leslie Dwyer), Mrs. Maudie Miller (Kathleen Harrison), Patricia Graham (Leueen MacGrath), Flight-Lieut. Teddy Graham (Jack Watling).

Peter Kyle has come to the hotel to revive an old love affair with Patricia (*above left*), whose loyalty is torn between her former lover and her young husband, Teddy Graham, with whom she is not deeply in love (*above right*). Meantime, Teddy's Squadron has been called out unexpectedly for a special night bombing operation, but during the take-off an intruder enemy plane shoots down one of the bombers. (*Below*): Squadron Leader Swanson (Ivan Samson) gets news that Graham, Skriczevinsky, and Miller are safely away. Then follows for the three women a night of deep anxiety.

Next morning Teddy Graham and Miller arrive back safely. *Left,* Teddy, confessing to a paralizing fear, reveals that he is not the superficial, unimaginative young man Patricia had thought him to be, and that he needs her more than Peter Kyle.

(*Below*): Doris, Countess Skriczevinsky, straining her ears at every sound, waits bravely for her husband, the daring Polish pilot, to return. After the lapse of hours she gives up hope, and in a moving scene asks Peter Kyle to translate for her a letter in French her husband had left against the time he might not return from a raid. From it she learns of his deep admiration and gratitude to her—things he had been unable to express in English, and her fear that the difference in their station in life (she was just a Cockney barmaid when they married), might one day destroy their marriage, is banished for ever.

The Count, however, has not been killed. His plane was brought down over the Channel, and after getting ashore he had walked back to the hotel, arriving unannounced and none the worse for his experience, just when everyone had given up hope.

(*Right*): Closing moment of the play. The Count, his English more incoherent than ever, tells the story of his night's adventure.

Stage Fright *(Continued from Page 22)*

beside him to share the rap on the knuckles. Holding the stage all alone, the artist becomes acutely conscious of that damnably exciting watching of the audience, like an all-powerful luminous eye steadily staring at him from a cave of inky blackness.

"There is no hope of cure; but even if there were the sensitive artist would have no desire to be totally immune from stage fright. Without it he would descend to the level of a marionette, coldly mechanical and quite devoid of all creative force. I remember suffering from a severe attack of nerves during a rehearsal of *The Farm of Three Echoes*. Feeling more dead than alive I wandered to Sybil Thorndike, standing in the wings, and begged a whispered word of comfort and advice. 'It's not a bit of good asking me, Laddie,' was her kindly reply. 'Although I was acting before your generation was thought of, I can't tell you what to do. It's simply maddening to get these nerve things and you'd think that I'd be past them at my age, but they're still with me and there seems to be no hope of losing them.'

"I think stage fright is far more prevalent in the film studio than in the theatre, even though there is no audience looking on. In their place is a far more deadly battery focussed upon the artist . . . the camera, the microphone, the arc lamps, and most terrifying of all, those unemotional technicians. They are all directed at the artist for the sole purpose of crystallising his living art upon an inanimate strip of shining celluloid. There is no hope of playing any of the old tricks with them . . . no chance of holding them in the hollow of his hand and swaying them at will to laughter or tears. They are far worse to face than the most unresponsive audience."

BALIOL HOLLOWAY, unrivalled exponent of Shakespeare in the Grand Manner, broke in at this point, saying, "You must draw a line between stage nerves and stage fright. There is as much difference between real stage fright and nervousness as between double pneumonia and a slight cold. Stage fright is paralysing to all the faculties and leaves the player helpless on the boards, but nervousness is a desirable quality in an actor. It is even necessary to the artist if he is to be on his toes, alert, and ready to get the last ounce out of his part. I should hate not to be nervous in a new part; it would simply mean that the role held no interest for me, in which case I should be a hypocrite if I attempted to play it.

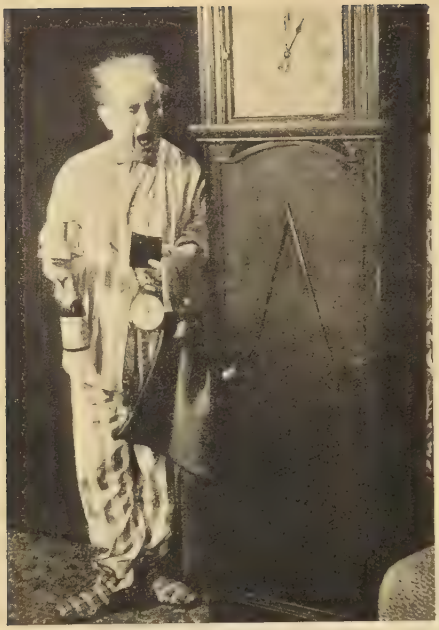
"I don't think the Shakespearean actor is more liable to 'nerves' than his colleague who never plays the classics. He may be more apprehensive of tackling a purple patch before a school audience, where every member is probably word perfect, but such anxiety does not exist when playing before adults, as they tend to forget those laboriously memorised speeches soon after leaving school. I was once in a company in which the Lady Macbeth bet us that she would insert a line from *Richelieu* in the Instigation Scene without the house being any the wiser. Macbeth said, 'If we should fail!' to which Lady Macbeth replied, 'We fail? In the bright lexicon of youth there's no such word as fail!' No protest was raised either in the audience that night or in the press next day, so the leading lady won her bet!"

Griff appreciated Baliol Holloway's point of view. "But," he protested, "your cold is really a pneumonic one. Stage nerves and stage fright are one and the same thing, stage fright being an intensified form of nerves. Stage nerves can develop into stage fright on a first night, due to the responsibility of the occasion, but for all that they remain symptoms of the same nervous force present in a greater or lesser degree. Out of control we call it stage fright; under control it is dubbed an attack of nerves; but that pit-of-the-tummy flutter, the tremolo, and the heart thump we get every time we are about to give a real performance is just as much stage fright as the intense sickening dread of a first night ordeal."

WONDERING if leading ladies suffered the same acute agony as the men, I sought Diana Wynyard's views. "I have many times been frightened on the stage," she confessed, "but have never had real stage fright, as I understand it. I am increasingly and sickeningly nervous on first nights, but the total effect only prevents me from acting as I would really like to.

"By stage fright I understand a form of seizure that roots the player to the boards, leaving him incapable of uttering a line. When 'nerves' attack me I still retain power of speech, but remain terribly unrelaxed and ill-at-ease. Years and years in the theatre may produce a cure, but I very much doubt it."

PERHAPS we really have to thank these infernal nerves for the advantage the theatre has over the cinema. The screen is as dead as frozen moonlight, but in the theatre the existence of that throbbing nervous tension between artist and audience is as exhilarating as radiant sunlight. Any night, it is true, the curtain may have to be rung down on an actress frustrated by fear, but on the other hand, that same pendulum, swinging in the other direction, can just as easily sweep her to heights so inspired that the critic can go home, as Maurice Baring once went, and write: "One felt that for the perfect utterance of beautiful words this was the Pillars of Hercules of mortal achievement."



PICTURES BY SWARBRICK STUDIOS

Some amusing scenes from the Avery Hopwood-Willson Collinson roaring farce (revised by Austin Melford), revived after ten years by Firth Shephard, at the Strand Theatre. *Left*: Sydney Howard as Bodger.

"NIGHT OF THE GARTER"

AT THE STRAND THEATRE

(*Below*):
L-R.: Max Kirby (Kenneth), Jack Melford (Bunny), Marjorie Brooks (Barbara), Joan Shannon (Gwendoline), Rene Ray and Neal Arden (Teddy). The part of Mrs. Fish, unfortunately not in either of these pictures, is played by Muriel George.

The INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPANY

REVIEWED BY
Audrey Williamson

THE International Ballet finished an ambitious season at His Majesty's on October 5th. This company has now established itself on an apparently permanent footing, and must expect to be judged by the critical standards applied to the more highly-developed Sadler's Wells Company. The time has come to pause and take stock.

The outstanding new productions were *Twelfth Night* and *Giselle*. *Giselle*, a purely classical ballet and a severé test for the ballerina, inevitably emphasises the chief weakness of this company, which is the quality of the corps-de-ballet as a team. "Survival of the fittest" might aptly describe the work of the *danseuses* in the second Act of this ballet and in *Swan Lake* (the men are, as war-time ballet goes, rather better, which may be due to the supervision of Stanislas Idzikowski as mâitre de ballet). This company spares no expense in the matter of décor, and the designs of Doris Zinkeisen are strikingly picturesque; though in the first Act, with its dizzy Walt Disney castle and Drury Lane peasant girls, they entirely betray the atmosphere of this simple romantic legend. (William Chappell is a designer with a much more sensitive feeling for ballet atmosphere; his background to *Swan Lake* is completely successful). There is a curious slip in the second Act, the Prince (who should in any case be in mourning) being dressed in a dark forest green so exactly the colour of the backcloth that the unfortunate dancer is practically blotted out! Harold Turner battled against this with some brilliant footwork; his miming of the part is good, though he has not Helpmann's almost "fey" immobility of grief and he must beware of over-acting after the death of Giselle. *Giselle* was chiefly important for establishing Mona Inglesby as a dancer of marked progress and intelligence. Without a spectacular technique, she gave a performance which was at once consistent, individual and sincere. Both her dancing and hand movements gave an impression of lightness and grace, though nervousness marred her technique in the second Act, and the great *arabesque* after Giselle's resurrection was too hurried. Here and in the second Act *Swan Lake*, though, her "line" and finish are excellent.

* * *

The most useful all-round artist in the company is Nina Tarakanova, and *Twelfth Night* owed most of all to her mercurially gay and witty Maria. Zinkeisen's designs were here much more successful, and there

MONA INGLESBY

24-year-old Ballerina Director of the International Ballet, as she appeared in their recent production of the hundred year old classic *Giselle*.

was some charming choreography by Andrée Howard, notably in the dances of Olivia and her ladies. The pattern and mood of Orsino's dream dance with Olivia and the corps-de-ballet, set to the "Death of Asë" from *Peer Gynt*, was specially lovely, though the choice of Grieg's music struck one as rather odd at times. The ballet was, though, far too long drawn out; its mistake lay in slavishly following the play step by step instead of, as in Helpmann's *Hamlet*, acting as a comment on it. The characters of Malvolio, Viola and Sir Toby also lost a great deal in translation; Feste and Aguecheek, like Maria, were cleverly expressed in ballet terms and amusingly danced by Leslie French and Rex Reid.

For the length of *Twelfth Night* one must blame Mona Inglesby as producer, and it is a fault from which her own ballets also suffer. She has not yet learned to weave patterns and steps into a balletic whole expressing character, atmosphere and story. *Endymion* is frankly weak in invention. In *Amoras* her dramatic narration is poor and there is no sense of climax (again the ballet goes on too long). The best thing in it,

apart from the lovely Elgar music, is the brisk little Mediæval Devil; his staccato precision is wittily devised and very well danced by Mark Baring. A sense of humour is perhaps Mona Inglesby's most original gift as a choreographer, and it is used to some good effect in *Planetomania;* though this blending of cocktail sophistication and the classical technique needs to be handled warily and with taste. (Its pitfalls are illustrated in this company's "Adam and Eve" frolic, *Love Me Not,* which is good fun for the first five minutes, after which the joke cheapens and wears thin). The present production of *Planetomania* is helped by Leslie French's delightfully funny miming as the Scientist, and Mona Inglesby's "dumb" blonde parlourmaid, bringing a feather-duster outlook to Olympus, is a gem.

Generally speaking, this company needs strengthening on the choreographic side, and its classical selection is not always in good taste. Why, in heaven's name, while Fokine's masterpiece is still available, attempt to revive the enervated *Prince Igor* choreography of Ivanov? English dancers are in any case quite unsuited to this work, and Messrs. Turner and Co. gave a distressing impression of the Warrior who had, and the Warriors who had not, taken the Eno's. *Aurora's Wedding* turned out to be, not the Diaghileff divertissement, but a haphazard selection of dances from Tchaikowsky's three ballets, performed with some curious deviations from the original. Much better to have extracted the Blue Bird variations and left it at that (they are finely danced by Turner and Inglesby, though the latter has not the glittering *élan* of the true Blue Bird: she is, by temperament, an Aurora). The pleasantest revival was Fokine's *Carnaval,* wisely performed with the original Bakst décor. (All companies should have at least one Fokine ballet, besides *Sylphides,* in the repertoire, to set a standard by which other modern work can be judged). Tarakanova's Columbine was adorably mischievous, and Turner's Harlequin brilliantly managed the technical feat of the fast to slow-motion pirouette. In other ballets—notably *Amoras*—this fine dancer needs to look to his finish. The Leslie French interlude, *Shakespeareana,* fitted very happily into some ballet programmes and this beautiful little artist delivered the songs and speeches with all his old magic.

* * *

There is some promising talent in this company, which, however, contains a dancer (and she is always given classical parts) with the most shocking "line" it has ever been my torture to watch. I was particularly impressed by Anne Negus, a first-rate little dancer with a precision reminiscent of Margaret Dale, and Rex Reid is in some ways the most promising young male dancer I've seen outside the Wells company. He has a good elevation and range (from the satire of Aguecheek to the romance of Eusebius) and can mime and use his hands. Unfortunately he bears a surprising physical resemblance to Helpmann which he is young enough to accentuate in make-up and mannerism. He should be encouraged to develop his individuality, and to strengthen his technique which is at the moment uncertain. Also he needs more virile parts on occasion; rôles like that of the Serpent in *Love Me Not* are not going to help his development.

* * * *

This company should now concentrate on raising the standard of its corps-de-ballet and overhauling its repertoire. There is a tendency to "play down to the public" at times. The appointment of an experienced choreographer—perhaps Miss Howard—to work with the company over a considerable period would be invaluable in raising the "tone" of the performances. With Sergueff as classical producer, Idzikowski as maître de ballet, an imposing list of designers and three first-rate leading dancers, something really valuable ought to be achieved.

"Old Chelsea"

Tunbridge-Sedgwick.

CHARLES HAWTREY and BETTY PERCHERON, two of the charming young principals in Bernard Delfont's musical romance *Old Chelsea,* starring Richard Tauber, which is due shortly in the West End, after its present tour.

In his extreme youth Charles Hawtrey was one of the best known of child actors, appearing in such productions as *Bluebell in Fairyland* and *Where the Rainbow Ends* and of course the immortal *Peter Pan.* More recently his name became identified with the wittiest and most sophisticated of London's intimate revues.

Betty is half French, and had a very exciting escape to England from France when war broke out. She commenced her career on the "straight" stage, and attracted quite a lot of attention by her performance in *Jane Eyre.* She later gravitated on to the musical stage, and was one of the hits of the show *Lady Behave* during its successful run at His Majesty's Theatre.

Notes and Topics

AMATEUR STAGE

WHILE it would be out of the question to expect any substantial revival in the production of the larger musical works, like *Rose Marie* and *Vagabond King*, by amateurs in war-time (chorus difficulties would be obstacle No. 1) yet this season the agents do report slightly more enquiries. That the public would respond is beyond doubt, and proved by the capacity business enjoyed by those amateur groups who have already performed such works. Also in London the professional productions of plays like *The Belle of New York* and *Wild Rose* have few vacant seats, proving the appeal of tuneful music and colourful productions.

On this musical side, secretaries should note that Samuel French, Ltd., have now taken over the rights of *No, No, Nanette*. Another point worthy of record—chatting with a leading costumier in October, he gave the railways full marks for most prompt deliveries of his costume baskets all over the country. In not one instance during the war has a parcel been lost or mishandled.

MR. ERIC NEWTON, the art critic of the *Sunday Times*, is giving a series of talks at Toynbee Hall, at 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoons, on "The Understanding of Painting and Sculpture." There will be twelve talks in all, and they form part of a current winter season's activities which is drawing keen audiences to the drama festivals and other branches of Toynbee Hall's work.

Touching on the drama festivals, this winter Toynbee Hall is organising it in two parts. On each of six successive Saturday afternoons beginning on October 17th three short plays will be presented, followed by a commentary on the acting by Mr. Neil Porter. On November 28th three of the Groups, chosen for excellence by Mr. Porter, will re-appear for final adjudication by Mr. Norman Marshall. So many entries have been received that it has been necessary to divert certain Groups to the second part of the festival, which will run on similar lines in January and February, 1943. Full details of the festival performances may be obtained from the Stage Director, Toynbee Hall, Commercial Street, E.1.

IN a report on this past summer's work for the Holidays at Home scheme, a Committee for Verse and Prose Recitation, which organised a number of dramatic entertainments and acted in an advisory capacity to a number of boroughs, offer these remarks:—

"On the whole, the plays have been well received by 'Holidays at Home' audiences, and in quite a number of boroughs our plays have been the only respite the audiences

(Continued inside Back Cover)

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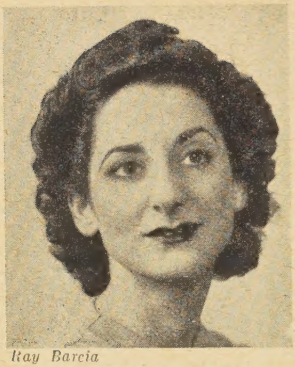
Ray Barcia's Star Horoscope



Ray Barcia

★

Below is Miss Barcia's general horoscope for readers, and a special reading featuring Olive Gilbert, who is starring in "Dancing Years." Miss Barcia is, of course, a member of 'The Dancing Years' company.

IF your birthday falls between October 22nd and November 22nd (or nearly) you have your solar influence in the sign Scorpio and this gives a very decided character. You are self-reliant, proud, positive, hard-working and fierce when attacked. You have strong passions and great control, you are obstinate and once having set your ambition in a certain direction are not likely to give way to anything or anybody. You have one of the strongest constitutions and superabundant energy and can drive yourself to an extent unapproachable by other signs. You can also stand a good deal of rough treatment from outside and are less likely than people of other signs to suffer from such things as a harsh upbringing or a long period of struggle with poverty. This is not to say you are insensitive, indeed all the watery signs are receptive and when hurt you are inclined to cherish grudges for a long time, but your excellent toughness does not allow you to give in when the world is against you and your independence constitutes a defence.

You can be irritable and extremely difficult to live with. Yet you are capable of tremendous sacrifice and allegiance once you get settled with the right person. You are lucky if you get through life without some shadow of tragedy or sorrow and yet, whatever happens to you you will always have an awareness of the tragedy and the mystery of life. Scorpio people excel as soldiers, fighters of every kind, doctors, surgeons and nurses. Some of the greatest actors have been typical Scorpions.

★ Olive Gilbert

HERE is a buoyant horoscope full of vitality, action, sunshine and the things that go to build success. Sagittarius rising endows hope through all contingencies and a fund of animal spirits ever apt to overflow to the cheering of those around. The alliance of Scorpio and Sagittarius gives unusual strength of character, but with all her firmness, determination, even wilfulness, Miss Gilbert never loses femininity. Occasionally an impish quality emerges in her behaviour, but the horoscope shows a nature singularly free from spite or resentment. With close conjunction of five planets it is impossible for this lady not to exercise great magnetism and charm. Few indeed could resist such pursuasion and it is hardly to be wondered at that Miss Gilbert has distinguished herself in dramatic contralto parts on the operatic stage, particularly in that of Carmen, the fatal woman! There is versatility in her stars and abundant talent for adaptation to all types of work and departments of life. The Sun in Scorpio in the house of friendship indicates a flow of affection towards her from people both lowly and distinguished; she will never lack assistance or encouragement; success comes with an ease that almost keeps the deeper of her qualities in abeyance. There is business sense and lively interest in domestic matters, mental equilibrium and a wholesome absence of "nerves." Looking at the horoscope one realises that Miss Gilbert might have extended her energies to any sphere and there become prominent, so well balanced and free from repression is she. Her ideal with regard to love is, as shown by Neptune in the seventh house a delicate and almost unattainable matter, a sort of will-o'-the-wisp. But with morbidity and brooding absent from the nature she remains a lady who knows where she wants to go, what she wants and why. One might add that she has a fair chance of getting it.

Save Your Waste Paper — and help the War Effort

The Amateur Stage

(Continued from page 31)

have had from military bands and concert parties.

"Audiences have varied greatly in size and it has been obvious that the organisation of the scheme in some boroughs has been sketchy. Publicity has often been at the last moment, and too scanty, and only where the officials have had entertainment at heart and have sold tickets by personal efforts have our shows had worth-while audiences. We have suffered from the attitude of some council officials, no doubt overworked, who have regarded evening shows as just so much overtime. The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Labour much too late in the spring to give local committees time to make adequate preparations. If the scheme is repeated next year, it should be possible to give all concerned much more notice.

"Transport has been a nightmare. If plays are to be performed next year under a similar scheme, we would suggest that, as dramatic entertainments (unlike concert parties) cannot be given without some stage properties, a petrol allowance should be made to local councils, and that they should be recommended by the Ministry of Labour to offer facilities to visiting companies. We have not always been left to our own devices, but we have frequently had to carry large pieces of scenery on our heads, and have sometimes taken our own truck with us to trundle baggage through the streets. In the black-out this is exciting but dangerous."

A SCHEME is being developed for using Plaistow Little Theatre for regular Thursday and Saturday evening performances throughout the winter.

Red Triangle and Shelter Players have two productions in hand—*Without the Prince* by Philip King, and *Gas Light* by Patrick Hamilton.

The Taverners, although regrettably losing through illness the services of Mr. H. T. Ripsher, their producer, are carrying on, and plan a tour of civil defence establishments beginning in November with *It's Autumn Now, Paradise Enow*, and a new play, *Tom's Maggie* by John Gadsden, a member of the company.

St. Mildred's Clerks start a second tour of *Arms and the Man* at the end of October, also visiting civil defence units. They contribute Act III of this play to the Toynbee Drama Festival.

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October Crossword Solution

The first three correct solutions came from: Miss Kathleen Haley, 9, Celia Road, N.19; Miss F. Macdonald, 24c/26, Charing Cross Road, W.C.2; Sergt. A. H. de M. Stamp, R.A.F., Babbacombe, Devon.

The solutions are: *Across*—2, Name of; 7, Egad; 8, Afar; 10, Riff; 12, Romances; 15, Mitre; 16, Attend; 18, Rill; 19, Myt; 20, Asher; 23, Lee; 25, Ela; 26, D'Urberville; 27, Amo; 29, Age; 30, Bilge; 32, Nat; 36, Paid; 38, Parrot; 41, Corps; 42, After ego; 44, Oslo; 45, Gish; 46, Aran; 47, Old age. *Down*—1, Deftly; 2, Nares; 3, Ado; 4, Fact; 5, Case; 6, Mimi; 9, Fetes; 11, Film idol; 13, Mother Goose; 14, Nay; 17, Noel; 18, Red tab; 21, Heeltaps; 22, Ranted; 23, Lea; 24, Eve; 28, Mina; 31, Girls; 33, Aprons; 34, Ate; 35, Score; 37, Isle; 39, Rain; 40, Otho; 43, Gag.

Miscellaneous Announcements

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